

Maurice Hinchey NEWS

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UPPER SUSQUEHANNA COUNTIES AWARDED \$250,000 GRANT

WASHINGTON - U.S. Representative Maurice Hinchey (NY-26) today announced that the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has awarded \$250,000 to a coalition of eleven New York counties in the watersheds of the Susquehanna River and the Chesapeake Bay. The funds, which will be administered by the Tioga County Soil and Water Conservation District, will help the counties to correct the nutrient and sediment related problems in the Chesapeake, while producing local benefits as well.

"This EPA grant will make these New York counties better able to contribute to the important work of restoring the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries," said Hinchey. "At the same time it will help to improve the quality of life for our local communities."

The Chesapeake Bay Program (CBP) is the regional partnership that has been directing and conducting the restoration of the Chesapeake Bay since the signing of the Chesapeake Bay Agreement of 1983. Over a year ago, the New York counties in the watershed signed a Memorandum of Understanding making them "headwaters partners" in the program. New York is the first of three headwater states to receive EPA CPB funds as a result of the signing. The \$250,000 grant provides funds for nine projects which include: historical baseline data collection on best management practices, nutrient management planning, installing riparian buffers, developing wetland protocols, road ditch inventory and demonstration projects, GIS tool creations, development of conservation subdivision design, and an educational web site that describes the projects.

Among the local benefits expected from this work are improved nutrient management plans for farmers, the mapping and rebuilding of highly eroded road ditches that release sediment into the waterways and cause costly road repairs, additional habitat for wildlife, flood attenuation and reduced stream bank erosion.

"Flooding, stream bank erosion and sustainable farming are some of the most important landscape issues that we need to address," said James Curatolo of the Upper Susquehanna Coalition. "This grant will support these efforts while aiding the larger regional efforts and provide a means to describe to our local, state and federal leaders the next steps in this strategic planning and implementation process."

The Chesapeake Bay Watershed covers about 4 million acres in New York. The 11 New York counties included in the Upper Susquehanna Coalition are Steuben, Chemung, Schuyler, Tioga, Tompkins, Cortland, Delaware, Chenango, Madison, Otsego and Broome.